



***Raduraksti*: Online Latvian Church Records**

Latvia “How to” Guide, Beginner Level: Instruction

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GOAL

This guide will teach you how to access online church records for Latvia using the *Raduraksti* website.

INTRODUCTION

Raduraksti is the digital reading room of the Latvian State Historical Archives and was created to preserve documents and provide digital access for family history research. The virtual archives provide access to a variety of church records, including Baptist, Evangelical Lutheran, Greek Catholic, Old Believer, Orthodox, Reformed Protestant, and Roman Catholic. This “How to” Guide focuses on locating the above-mentioned church records, but the virtual archives also contain Jewish records revision lists, the 1897 All-Russia Census, and Riga house registers. The website is easy to use and is a great resource in the search for your Latvian ancestry.

Before using this “How to” Guide, you will need to know the religion of your ancestors, as well as the parish they attended. For Jewish ancestors, you will need to know the rabbinate.

Some records from *Raduraksti* have been indexed on the website *Ciltskoki*. You may want to consult the following “How to” Guide to determine if records have been indexed for your location before continuing:

- [*Ciltskoki: Indexed Records from Raduraksti*](#)

For information on how to read Latvian records, which may be written in various languages, consult the following sources:

- [Latvian Genealogical Word List](#)
- [Russia Handwriting Wiki](#) – contains links to words lists, tutorials, and other useful resources.
- [Germany Handwriting Wiki](#) – contains links to word lists, tutorials, and other useful resources.
- [Polish Genealogical Word List](#)

HOW TO

Getting Started

The *Raduraksti* website is in Latvian but can be easily navigated using this “How to” Guide. The

website can be translated into English using Google Translate (when using Google Chrome, right-click anywhere on the page and select **Translate to English**). However, on some pages, you may need to use the untranslated Latvian version, as some abbreviations will be translated incorrectly.

In this “How to” Guide, Latvian terms are accompanied by their English translation in parentheses.

1. Go to the *Raduraksti* website, found at raduraksti.arhivi.lv.
2. To access records, you will need to first register for a free account. Click on **Reģistrēties (Register)**, found in the upper right-hand corner of the page. Enter your **Jūsu vārds un uzvārds (Name and Surname)**, **Jūsu e-pasta adrese (Email Address)**, and **Parole (Password)**. Retype your password in the **Atkārtojiet paroli (Repeat password)** box to ensure accuracy. Then click on **Piereģistrēties (Pre-register)**. Upon registering, you will receive an email confirming the creation of your account. Be sure to check the Spam/Junk folder in your email in case the confirmation email ends up there. Click on the activation link in the email and sign in (using your email address and newly created password) to complete your *Raduraksti* registration.
3. From now on, to use the *Raduraksti* website, return to raduraksti.arhivi.lv and sign in by clicking on **Pieslēgties (Sign in)**.
4. To view church records, click on **Baznīcu grāmatas (Church books)** under the center heading **Kolekcijas (Collections)**.
5. A list of religions will appear. Choose your ancestor's religion from the list.
 - **Baptisti** = Baptist
 - **Ev. lut.** = Evangelical Lutheran
 - **Mozus ticīgie** = Jewish
 - **Pareizticīgie** = Russian Orthodox
 - **Reformāti** = Reformed Protestant
 - **Romas katoļi** = Roman Catholic
 - **Uniāti** = Greek Catholic
 - **Vecticībnieki** = Old Believers
6. After you have clicked on an option from this list, various jurisdictions will appear, depending upon the religion. These may include:
 - **Draudzes** = Parishes
 - **Apdzīvotās vietas** = Inhabited places
 - **Draudzes ārpus Latvijas teritorijas** = Parishes outside the territory of Latvia
 - **Rabināti** = Rabbinate
 - **Dekanāti** = Deaneries

Clicking on one of these jurisdictions will bring up a list of places it includes. Clicking on Greek Catholic or Old Believers shows you a list of towns, rather than a list of jurisdictions.

7. Select your ancestor's parish or town from the list of choices. Latvian spellings are used,

but the German spelling may be included in parentheses.

8. An inventory of available records will then appear, with date ranges as well as abbreviations or record type descriptions. In some cases, the abbreviations or descriptions may be incorrect, and you will need to look at the images to determine the correct record type. Note the following definitions:
 - **Dzimušie** (abbreviated **Ds** or **Dz**) = **birth**.
 - **Laulātie** (abbreviated **L**) = **marriage**.
 - **Mirušie** (abbreviated **M**) = **death**.
 - **Šķirtie** (abbreviated **Šķ**) = **divorce** (Only found in Jewish records).
 - **latviešu vācu** (abbreviated **l.v.** or **latv. v**) = **Latvian, German**. If a church book is marked as l.v., then it includes both ethnic Latvians and ethnic Germans, but if it marked with only a v., then the book will contain only ethnic Germans.
9. After you have clicked on a record type and year range, images of the records will appear in a thumbnail view. To view a full-sized record, click on the desired image. You can toggle between records by clicking on the arrows found on the left and right sides of the page. The image number appears in the top left, while the upper right corner offers four different tools:
 - **Zoom:** Click on the magnifying glass to zoom in on the image. (You can then click on the image and drag it around to view the part of the image you are interested in.)
 - **Full Screen:** This icon allows you to view the record full screen. Press Escape on your keyboard to exit this view.
 - **Link and Share:** Clicking on the arrow icon and then on **Atvērt attēlu** (open image) opens up the image in a new tab, with a URL that allows you to access this specific image again. This link can be copied and shared or attached as a source to an online family tree.
 - **Exit:** The X symbol returns you to the thumbnail view.

Notice that the pathway of items you clicked on (the record type, jurisdiction, town, etc.) shows up underneath the **Meklēt (search)** bar. You can click on any of these items to return to that specific step.

PRACTICE

To practice, search for **Roman Catholic** records for the parish of **Dagdas**.

1. Open the *Raduraksti* website by going to raduraksti.arhivi.lv.
2. Click on **Pieslēgties (Sign in)** to sign into your account using your email address and password.
3. On the main page, choose the option **Baznīcu grāmatas (Church books)**.
4. From the list of available religions, select **Romas katoļi (Roman Catholic)**.

5. Click on **Draudzes (Parishes)**.
6. Locate and click on **Dagdas**.
7. Click on **1899-1909 Dzimušie** to view the birth records from 1899 to 1909..
8. Click on the **image icons** to view them full-sized and browse the records to locate your entry of interest.

Now, locate the records for the **Orthodox** parish of **Čerņickas**.

1. Return to the church books by clicking on **Baznīcu grāmatas (Church books)** from the pathway just under the **Meklēt (search)** bar.
2. From the list of available religions, click on **Pareizticīgie** (Orthodox).
3. Click on **Draudzes (Parishes)**.
4. From the list of towns and parishes, click on **Aderkašu**.
5. You will now see a list of many **birth, marriage, and death (Dz, L, and M)** records available, ranging from 1880 to 1909. Click on the **1895-1895 Dz,L,M** (1895 birth, marriage, and death records) option.
6. Click on the **image icons** to view them full-sized and browse the records to locate your entry of interest.

ACTIVITY

Now, test your skills you have learned in this “How to” Guide. The Activity is a way to check your knowledge and let you know you’ve mastered the Guide! Click [here](#) to try out the Activity.